

Adapted line drawing of Vegetable Harvest | Michael Chiago

MICHAEL CHIAGO

Vegetable Harvest

gouache on illustration board

Commissioned with funding from the Tucson/Pima Arts Council

ACNO 2003.2.9

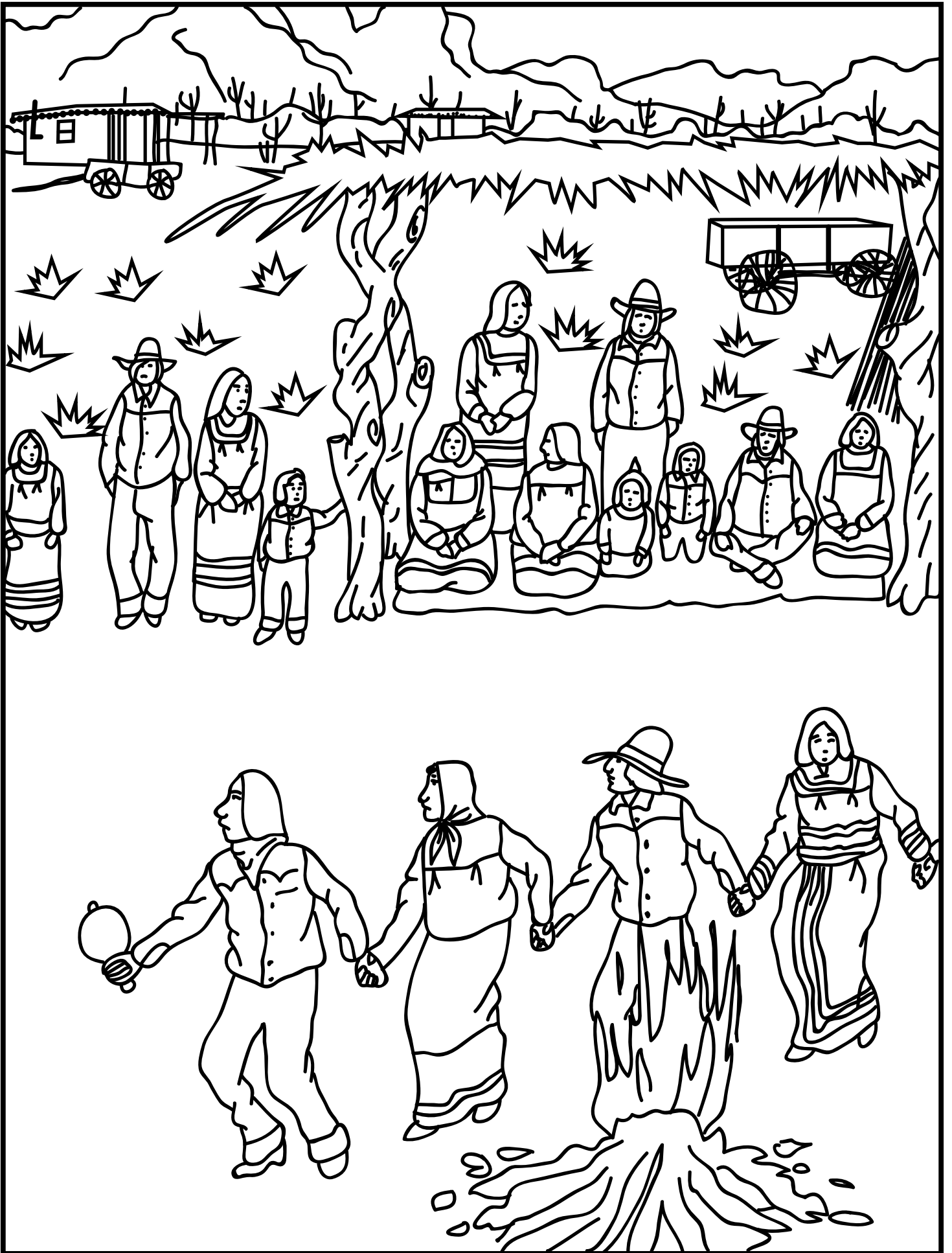
From the TOHONO CHUL exhibitions

Seasons of the Saguaro: Michael Chiago

The Franco Family: Tohono O'odham Carvers

In this piece, two women and a boy carry beautiful baskets full of corn, squash, melons and devil's claw, the bounty of cultivated foods that came as a result of summer rains. Summer rain brings the harvest season for the tepary beans, squash and corn. Traditional Tohono O'odham fields were located at the mouths of arroyos where floodwaters deposited fertile silt from the foothills and mountains. Crops were planted in soil made rich by previous seasons of flooding and were irrigated with water from the current season's rainfall. The Tohono O'odham honored the desert's rhythms and the desert rewarded their wisdom and hard work with successful harvests. Tohono O'odham farmers grew devil's claw for making baskets, including those used in the saguaro wine ceremony to summon rain back to the desert year after year.

Michael Chiago was born on the Tohono O'odham reservation west of Tucson. Set against a backdrop of mountains and desert, his artworks depict the traditional gatherings that bring his people together in friendship and prayer. Chiago illustrated the children's book, *Sing Down the Rain*, which tells the story of the saguaro wine ceremony. These paintings are part of a series commissioned by Tohono Chul for our Saguaro Discovery Trail that explores the importance of the saguaro for the Tohono O'odham people.



Adapted line drawing of Wine Ceremony | Michael Chiago

MICHAEL CHIAGO

Wine Ceremony

gouache on illustration board

Commissioned with funding from the Tucson/Pima Arts Council

ACNO 2003.2.7

From the TOHONO CHUL exhibitions

Seasons of the Saguaro: Michael Chiago

The Franco Family: Tohono O'odham Carvers

I'itoi, the creator of the Tohono O'odham, taught the Desert People their sacred wine ceremony so they could summon the rain. He taught them to make saguaro wine and gather to drink the wine and sing important songs to sing down the rain. For two nights, villagers dance in a circle outside of the Rain House where the saguaro wine ferments. The chief singers sing and make music with gourd rattles. The medicine man, in the center, holds eagle feathers to catch the wind to blow the clouds in, bringing rain. Once the wine is ready, people sit in a circle and sing stories about how the wine makes the rains come and pass the wine baskets around, drinking until it is gone.

Michael Chiago was born on the Tohono O'odham reservation west of Tucson. Set against a backdrop of mountains and desert, his artworks depict the traditional gatherings that bring his people together in friendship and prayer. Chiago illustrated the children's book, *Sing Down the Rain*, which tells the story of the saguaro wine ceremony. These paintings are part of a series commissioned by Tohono Chul for our Saguaro Discovery Trail that explores the importance of the saguaro for the Tohono O'odham people.



Adapted line drawing of QAA'O Katsina, Corn Katsina | Unknown Hopi Artist

UNKNOWN HOPI ARTIST

QAA'O Katsina, Corn Katsina

painted and carved cottonwood with feathers and shell

Gift of the Estate of Mrs. Robert Wilson

ACNO 86.2.18

From the Tohono Chul exhibitions

From Native Hands: The Collection of Tohono Chul Park

Corn is Life

Tohono Chul Park's Permanent Collection of Native American Crafts, 1997

Quilting From the Hopi Mesas

Where Nature, Art and Culture Connect

Quilting on the Hopi Mesas

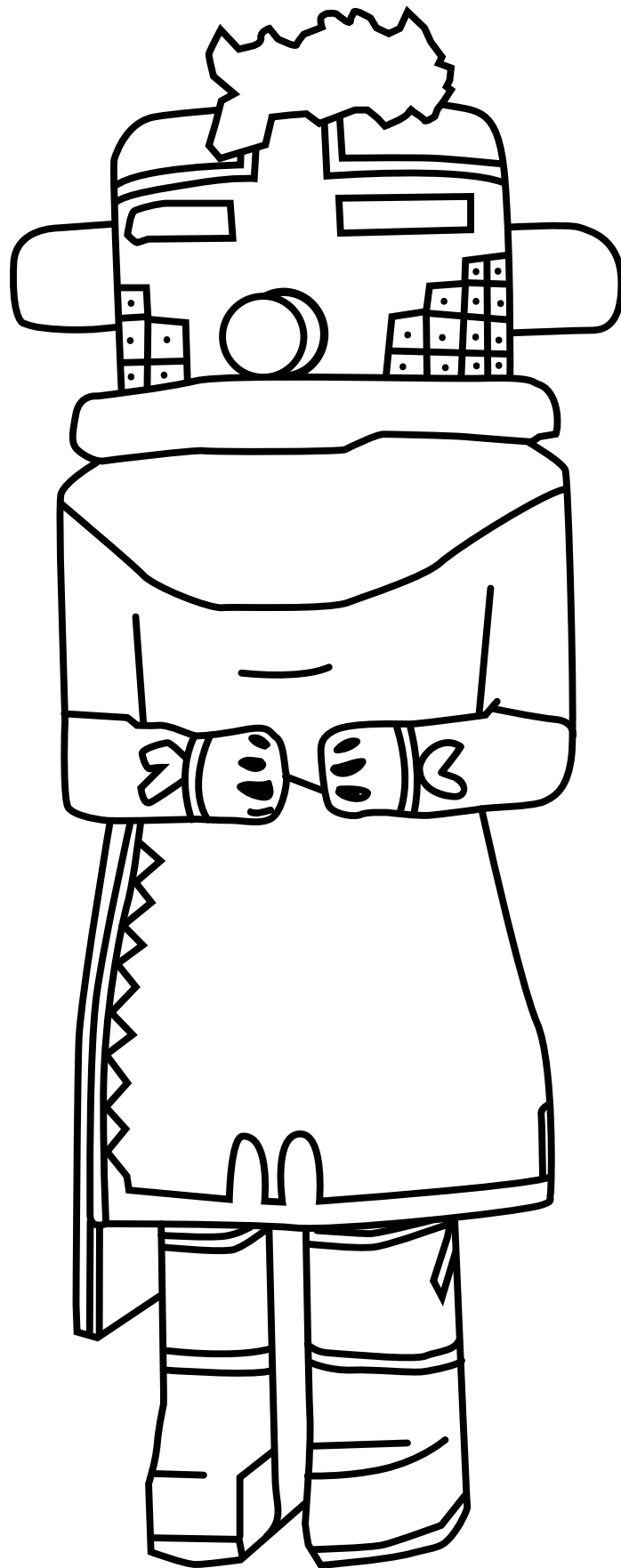
QAA'O is the younger brother of the Hemis Kachina and appears in Powamuya and regular dances. He performs in the Kiva Plaza and mixed dances, representing prayer for the fruition and growth of corn.

The importance of corn as a life-sustaining staple dates back thousands of years. Anthropologists who have carbon-dated finds at the Tehuacan Valley in Mexico to 5000 B.C., and at Bat Cave in New Mexico to 2000 B.C. have discovered cultivated corn. The great civilizations of the Mayas, Incas and Aztecs had corn deities who they believed bestowed abundant food or withheld a bountiful harvest. According to legend, a Mayan hero named Gucumatz embarked on a journey into unknown and perilous lands to bring an edible plant, corn, to his people. To the Incas, corn was under the patronage of Manco Cápac, god of fertility. The Aztecs associated corn with their god Quetzalcoatl and goddess Zilonen, and they performed elaborate ceremonies and even made human sacrifices to please their corn deities.

In 1492, when Columbus reached the New World, he was introduced to maize, corn. Within a few years, corn had been transported to Europe. The Portuguese later took corn seeds with them when voyaging to Africa, the East Indies, and Asia. By the late 16th century, corn was being cultivated in many areas of the world.

It took centuries for corn to be carried north from Mexico to the American Southwest by migrating Indians. From time immemorial to today, indigenous people have revered corn as a life-sustaining gift. Corn gods, corn maidens, corn mothers, seed-planting ceremonies, harvest rituals, stories, songs and chants are representative of ways for honoring this, the most sacred of plants among Native Americans.

For the Hopi who live on mesas in Northern Arizona, corn is a common theme in katsina songs and is used in many rituals. According to their oral tradition, when the Hopi people emerged from the underworld, they were offered a variety of corn. The Hopi selected a small ear of blue corn, thus determining their destiny. Corn is the traditional measure of Hopi wealth and its ceremonial use is very important.



Adapted line drawing of Rujan Katsina, Rasp Katsina | Unknown Hopi Artist

UNKNOWN HOPI ARTIST

Rugan Katsina, Rasp Katsina

carved and painted cottonwood with feathers and fur

Gift of the Estate of Agnes T. and Don L. Smith

ACNO 98.1.82

From the Tohono Chul exhibitions

New Acquisitions from the Agnes T. and Donald L. Smith Collection

Where Nature, Art and Culture Connect

Quilting on the Hopi Mesas

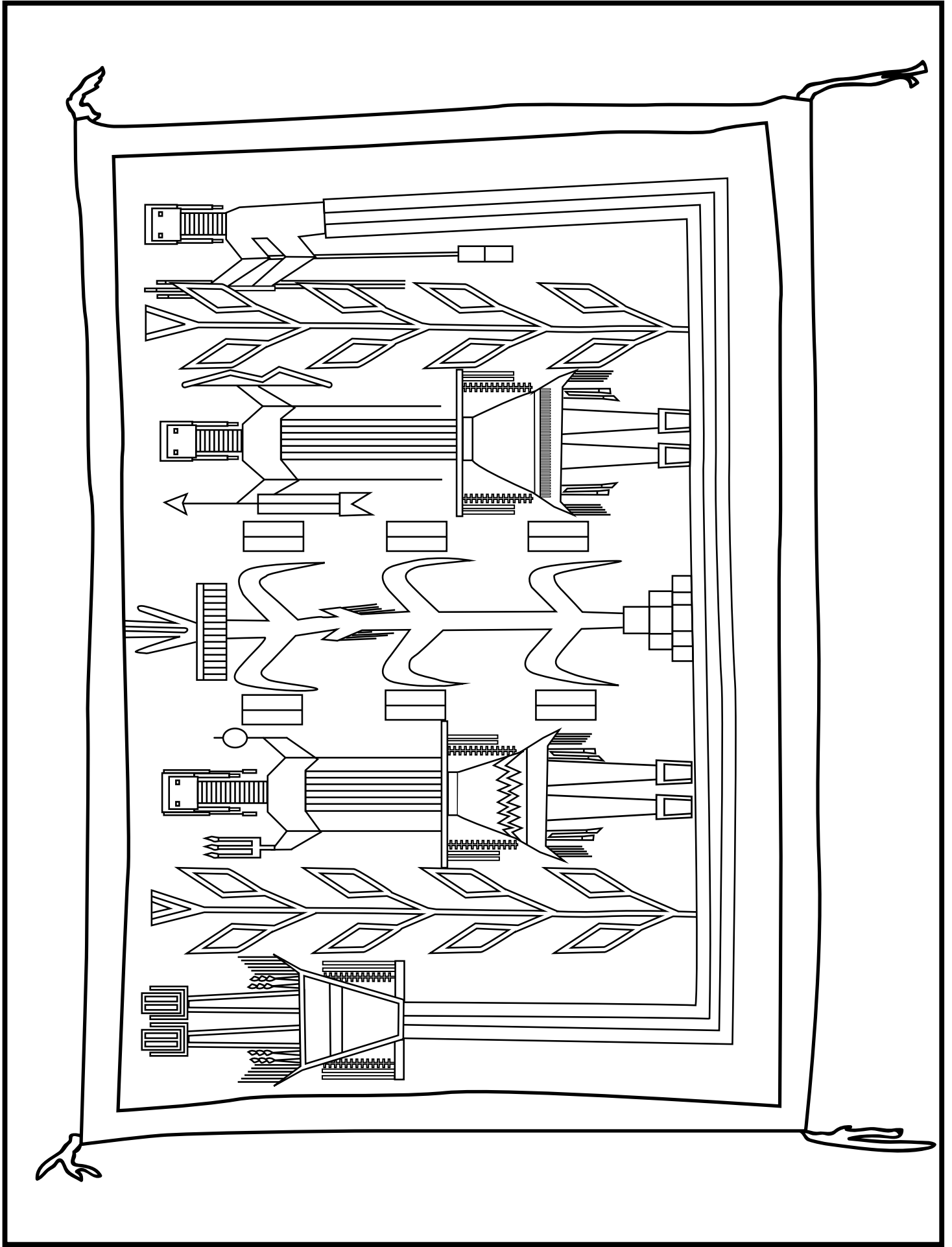
Markings on each side of this Katsina's face represent corn, a plant that is very important to the Hopi people. The Rugan Katsina comes in groups, accompanied by corn maidens who play on rasp instruments.

The importance of corn as a life-sustaining staple dates back thousands of years. Anthropologists who have carbon-dated finds at the Tehuacan Valley in Mexico to 5000 B.C., and at Bat Cave in New Mexico to 2000 B.C. have discovered cultivated corn. The great civilizations of the Mayas, Incas and Aztecs had corn deities who they believed bestowed abundant food or withheld a bountiful harvest. According to legend, a Mayan hero named Gucumatz embarked on a journey into unknown and perilous lands to bring an edible plant, corn, to his people. To the Incas, corn was under the patronage of Manco Cápac, god of fertility. The Aztecs associated corn with their god Quetzalcoatl and goddess Zilonen, and they performed elaborate ceremonies and even made human sacrifices to please their corn deities.

In 1492, when Columbus reached the New World, he was introduced to maize, corn. Within a few years, corn had been transported to Europe. The Portuguese later took corn seeds with them when voyaging to Africa, the East Indies, and Asia. By the late 16th century, corn was being cultivated in many areas of the world.

It took centuries for corn to be carried north from Mexico to the American Southwest by migrating Indians. From time immemorial to today, indigenous people have revered corn as a life-sustaining gift. Corn gods, corn maidens, corn mothers, seed-planting ceremonies, harvest rituals, stories, songs and chants are representative of ways for honoring this, the most sacred of plants among Native Americans.

For the Hopi who live on mesas in Northern Arizona, corn is a common theme in katsina songs and is used in many rituals. According to their oral tradition, when the Hopi people emerged from the underworld, they were offered a variety of corn. The Hopi selected a small ear of blue corn, thus determining their destiny. Corn is the traditional measure of Hopi wealth and its ceremonial use is very important. Different colors of corn represent the four cardinal directions.



Adapted line drawing of Sandpainting Rug with Yeii Figures | Unknown Hopi Artist

UNKNOWN HOPI ARTIST

Sandpainting Rug with Yeii Figures

handspun wool with aniline dyes

Gift of the Estate of Agnes T. and Don L. Smith

ACNO 98.1.79

From the Tohono Chul exhibitions

New Acquisitions from the Agnes T. and Donald L. Smith Collection

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Where Nature, Art and Culture Connect

Sheep, Wool and Weaving in Navajo Life

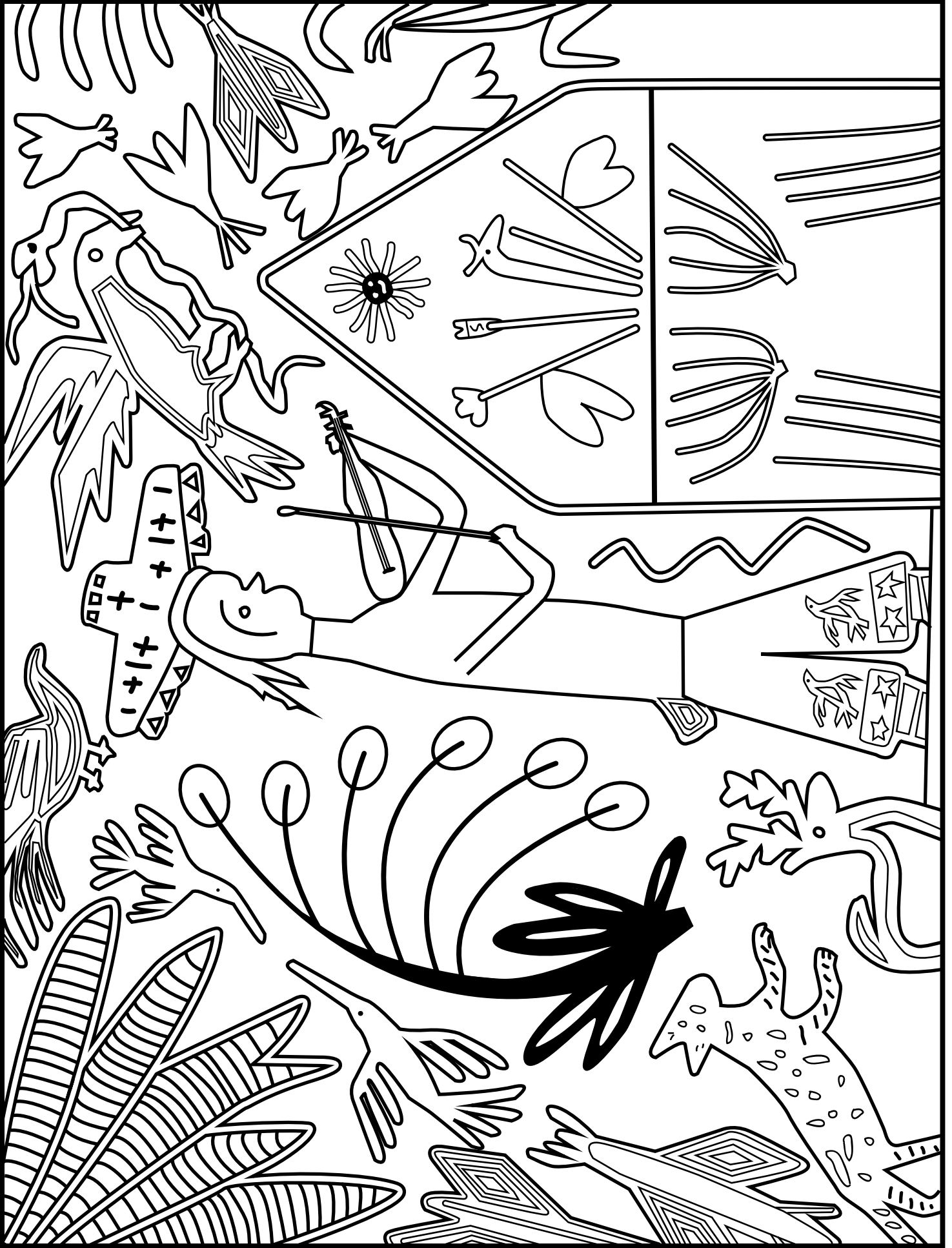
Collection Piece of the Month, March 2007

Weaving: Native Baskets and Blankets

Navajo weavings were traditionally made to keep people warm, to protect and cover, and in some cases, to help transport items. They are a very versatile and useful craft and the Navajo have long been masters at creating quality weavings. Early blankets were so densely woven that they were waterproof. This became invaluable to many people in contact with the Navajo, and they could sell their blankets for a small fortune. Before tourists became interested in their use as durable rugs, the patterns were simple and all dyes came from plants and minerals. Since the late 1800's though, textile weaving has become a highly successful tourist industry. Aniline or commercial dyes were first synthesized in the 1850's. The natural dyes drawn from plants, animals and minerals produced colors that could be very vivid, and therefore the identification of aniline dyes on a rug is reduced to an educated guess.

The vivid colors of this sandpainting rug suggest the use of aniline dyes. This rug pattern is inspired by the stylized figures of the Yeii. These are the Holy People represented in Navajo sandpaintings. The compositions that medicine men create on the ground with colored sand during curing ceremonies are destroyed the same day. In the beginning, many felt that the representation of these figures in a permanent state was dangerous and even sacrilegious, but a few artists began to weave them in the 1800's and continues today.

Yeii rugs are very popular due to their symbolic content. There is no religious content to this piece, to maintain Navajo privacy, but they do carry a spiritual theme. Yeii rugs are known to be handspun, synthetically dyed, and usually coarse. The Yeii figures in this rug are long and thin, front facing figures that have healing powers. Male Yeii's hold a rattle in one hand and crooked lightning in the other, while a female holds a rattle and an evergreen bough. There are two Yeii in the middle of the rug and surrounding them on three sides is the Rainbow Yeii, which is open on the side meant to face east. Between and around the Yeii's are stalks of sacred plants, corn and tobacco. Because of the corn images, this rug may represent the Blessing the Way, a pattern based on a ceremony for blessing others with a long and good life. The solid border and background are typical of rugs woven in Northern Arizona. Corn was a food staple for daily life. It was an important part of Native American diet. It is known as one of the most versatile foods and can be grown in almost every state in America.



Adapted line drawing of Yarn Painting | Unknown Huichol Artist

UNKNOWN HUICHOL ARTIST

Yarn Painting

wood, beeswax and yarn

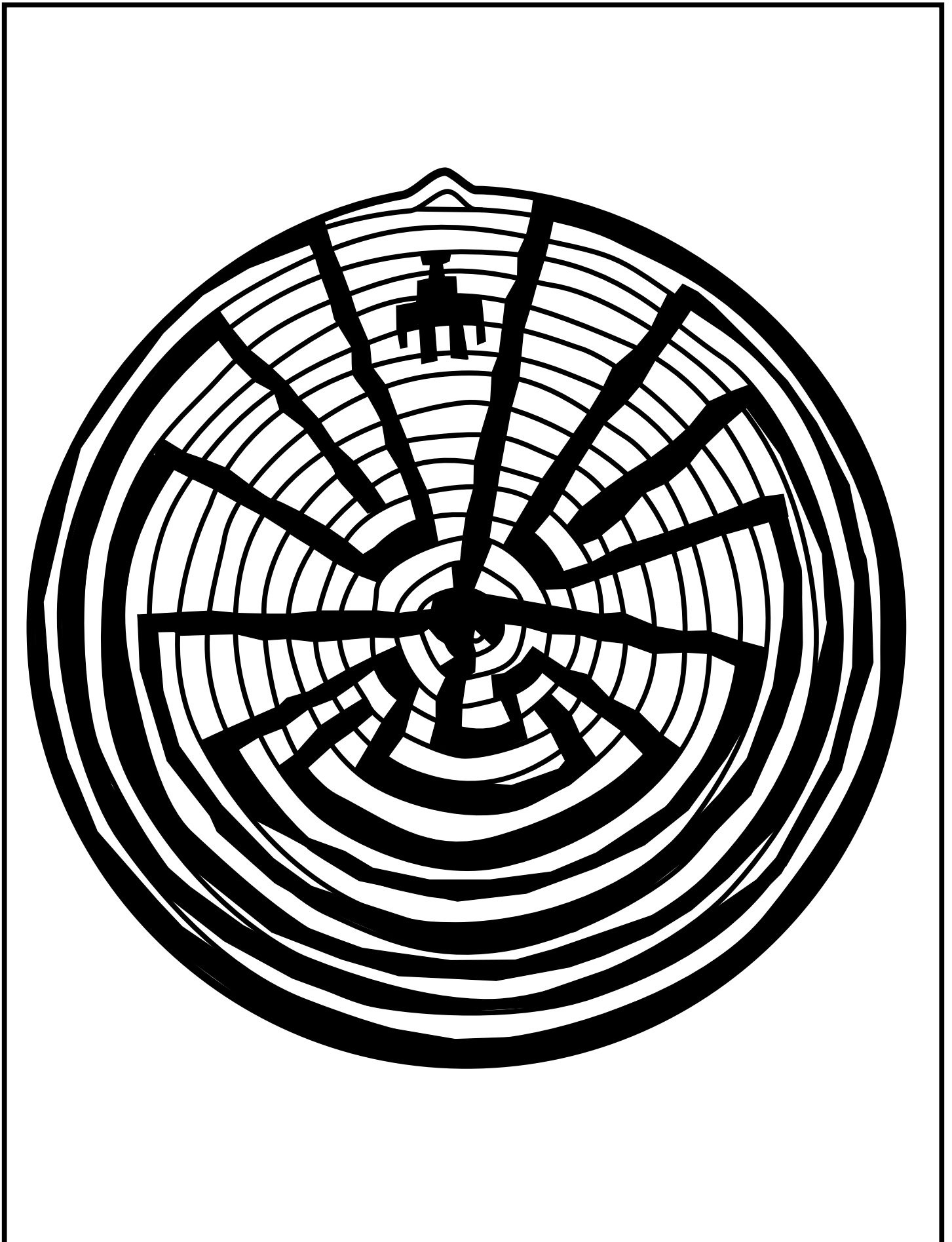
Gift of Julie Harding

ACNO 87.4.1

From the Tohono Chul exhibition

Tohono Chul Park's Permanent Collection, 1994

Yarn paintings are not sacred but may represent sacred objects, stories or experiences. They are used to teach children about the Huichol culture, as decoration and as an expression of a personal experience. The Huichol are known for their colorful artwork and is said to be where yarn painting originated. The most used symbol is also their most profitable agricultural crop, corn. This Yarn Painting depicts a man with fiddle beside an enclosed space representing the sun with seed sprouting under the earth and shoots springing from the earth. Corn, blooming plants, animals, birds complete the piece representing grown and prosperity.



Adapted line drawing of Man-in-the-Maze Plaque | Unknown Tohono O'odham Artist

UNKNOWN TOHONO O'ODHAM ARTIST

Man-in-the-Maze Plaque

beargrass with devil's claw and yucca

Gift of the Estate of Agnes T. and Don L. Smith

ACNO 98.1.1

From the Tohono Chul exhibition

New Acquisitions from the Agnes T. and Donald L. Smith Collection

Selections from the Permanent Collection

Southwest Indian Basketry: Transforming Plants into Art

Sharing Our Traditions - Artworks by Students from Indian Oasis Primary School

The Franco Family: Tohono O'odham Carvers

Collection Piece of the Month, February 2007

Made For Trade: An Unconventional Look at Native American Art

Weaving: Native Baskets and Blankets

A flat basket like this one is called a plaque. Since the Tohono O'odham had no use for them, they made them solely for sale. They were made for wall decoration or could be used as a hot plate. The Man-in-the-Maze is a cultural symbol of the Tohono O'odham whose story has many variations. The man at the top of the plaque represents birth and as he goes through the maze, he gets older and his life changes until he reaches the dark center representing death.

While many basket makers use commercial dyes to save time, some still use organic and natural materials for the colorful elements of their baskets. Some of the most commonly used plants in the Southwest include:

White - willow, yucca and sumac

Black - devil's claw

Green and Yellow - yucca

Red - Spanish bayonet root are.

A variety of other plant materials can be utilized to produce dyes includes:

Black - sunflowers seeds and sumac bark

Light rust - lichens and mountain mahogany root bark

Yellow - barberry roots